



CHILDREN'S ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & PROTECTION ADVISORY COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes

January 19, 2016

House Office Building, Annapolis, MD

CEHPAC MEMBERS: Dr. D. Abney (phone), Del. Angela Angel (staff), V. Carella; Dr. M. Latshaw; Dr. J. Miller; Dr. C. Mitchell; B. Thomas; N. Witherspoon

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dr. D. Bishai; C. Church; Dr. G. Diette; Dr. B. Gitterman; R. Hofstetter; J. Levy; Dr. E. Matsui; A. Mezu; J. Powell; C. Varney-Alvarado

GUESTS: Dr. Jared Duncan – pediatric ophthalmologist; Cindy Eckard – public; Evi Lowman – Maryland PIRG; Rebecca Rehr – MD Environmental Health Network; Theodora Scarato – public; Dr. Xaviour Walker – preventive medicine resident

STAFF: R. Hess-Mutinda, DHMH

Welcome and Introductions

Dr. Mitchell opened the meeting with a welcome and introductions.

Review and Approval of Minutes

A quorum was not present at the meeting to approve the 2015 minutes. Approval of minutes is planned for the March 2016 meeting.

DISCUSSION

School Environmental Health Issues

➤ Update on workgroup review of Wireless in Schools

Dr. Latshaw reviewed the current status of the workgroup. Linda Li, a public health graduate student from the University of Maryland, is compiling a literature review on the topic to share with the workgroup and the Council. A call has been set up with the workgroup to discuss the current status and literature review results. The workgroup will share the findings with the full Council in Spring 2016. V. Carella pointed out that Baltimore City Public Schools are currently creating guidelines for use of laptops and other technology in schools, and suggested that input and advice from the Council would be helpful to the Public School system as they establish these guidelines. **Public Comment:** T. Scarato provided a handout entitled "Wireless and Your Family's Health: Simple Precautions Make Sense."

➤ Public Inquiry Regarding Computer Screens in the Classroom

The Council has been approached by a member of the public concerning the impacts of computer screens in the classroom on students' vision and eye health. **Public Comment:** Ms. Cindy Eckard entered written testimony on this issue, which can be

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found as an attachment to these minutes. Ms. Eckard read the testimony to the Council. Dr. Jared Duncan, a pediatric ophthalmologist/member of public, shared knowledge and perspective regarding the potential effects of computer usage in children, and answered questions from Council members. Dr. Mitchell asked the group to consider both ocular and ergonomic issues that may be associated with computer usage at school, specifically for children. Other Council members suggested the importance of more recess and use of specific technology to reduce risks. Ms. Eckard concluded the discussion by stating she has approached Del. King to sponsor legislation to address these issues.

➤ **Update to Green Cleaning in Schools**

V. Carella shared updates regarding green cleaning in schools that included: 1) the Maryland Environmental Health Network will host the 2nd Roundtable Discussion with school facility staff on appropriate use of green cleaning products and 2) Ms. Carella suggested that the Council check in with Maryland State Department of Education on the status of implementation of the green cleaning in schools law; Ms. Carella offered to draft the letter.

Update on Synthetic Turf Fields

Dr. Mitchell has almost completed the literature review of currently available studies and information. The review will be shared with the Council as soon as it is complete. Both the University of Maryland and Johns Hopkins University have responded to the inquiry letter regarding the possibility of a study on synthetic turf fields. The Universities are interested in further discussions regarding this type of study.

2016 Legislative Session and Emerging Issues

Members discussed the best way to address proposed legislation during the legislative session that complies with the Open Meetings Law and other stipulations of public meetings. Ms. Witherspoon suggested picking specific items of the Council's interest and providing high level guidance. Dr. Mitchell suggested this type of guidance could be articulated through a policy statement from the Council that could be shared with legislators. N. Witherspoon and V. Carella will draft the policy statement and share with the Council prior to the next meeting, for feedback and discussion during the meeting.

Wrap Up and Next Steps

Ms. Eckard asked about her next steps and what the Council is willing to do regarding computers in classrooms. Dr. Mitchell responded that the Council does not have a timetable regarding the issue but will remain engaged in the discussion and hopes to engage the pediatric ophthalmology community for further discussion.

Next CEHPAC meeting: March 16th @ 9:30am – MD Department of the Environment (1800 Washington Blvd, Baltimore)